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Washington, Jan. 30—The latest coup in South Viet Nam suggests the urgent need of a white paper documenting the entire chain of U.S. moves before the overthrow of the Diem government last Nov. 1.

We bring this up because of the hysterical buck-passing going on today following Gen. Nguyen Khanh's seizure of power in Saigon.

There is no argument that the whole mess developed in large part from actions taken in Washington last summer after the Buddhist demonstrations. But try to get an honest and complete count on just what these moves were which led to the bloody end of the Diem regime!

The newest coup is embarrassing to the State Department. Our diplomatic wing insists that it never, never connived to get rid of Diem. The military in the Pentagon disagrees. So does the Central Intelligence Agency, which, however, is also on the spot now because its spy boys in Saigon had no advance word on the Khanh coup.

A government "white paper," if ordered by President Johnson and honestly put together, would settle this inter-agency feuding once and for all.

It cannot be denied that much of the responsibility for the mess centers here. It has to be that way when governmental confusion develops in a country where we have invested more than \$1 billion in military and economic support, plus military manpower totaling 14,000 at a minimum.

And President Johnson is certainly aware of the fact that the latest seizure of power—even by a strongly pro-American general—means there will be another time lag before the military effort against Viet Cong moves in high gear again.

It has sagged since November, as Defense Secretary McNamara informed Congress earlier this week. His hope of early improvement now diminishes because Gen. Khanh must first consolidate his political position before getting on with the war.

'Diem Must Go' Advice Proved Faulty

Johnson, of course, had done very well so far in his effort to face up to foreign problems with equanimity.

But it is now fairly clear that the real test of his ability to keep his blood pressure from rising is going to come when the dust settles after this latest Viet Nam coup.

It would be typical of him to find out explicitly just how the mess developed in the first place. The South Viet Nam problem is one he inherited. In order to tackle it and solve it, the first order of business should be to get rid of those who gave President Kennedy bum advice last August.



Gen. Nguyen Khanh
A pro-American embarrasses us

Until there is hard evidence to the contrary, that advice apparently came from Undersecretary of State W. Averell Harriman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Roger Hillsman and Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge.

At the time of the Diem overthrow three months ago, those three were almost always listed as the chief proponents of the "Diem must go" philosophy.

Now this is suddenly and somewhat vehemently denied within the State Department.

An About-Face on Departmental Feuding

There is an effort to suggest now that the State Department, Pentagon and CIA did not have any significant policy difference over Diem, that there was general agreement that he should be supported until a stable government could replace him.

Until convincing proof to the contrary can be supplied, the evidence is to the contrary. During last September and October, CIA Director John McCone and Defense Secretary McNamara were opposed to a coup d'etat for solid military reasons.

On of the mysteries which should be clear up in a document showing day-by-day moves by our embassy, military and intelligence agents is just what influenced President Kennedy to go along with the idea of a Diem ouster.

On Aug. 24, after the closing of a dozen Buddhist pagodas by Diem forces, the U.S. Information Agency, with our Saigon embassy's backing, was virtually calling on the Viet Nameese military to take over.

Yet on Sept. 9, in a television interview, Kennedy showed that he definitely was going along with the Pentagon on the Diem issue.

"What I am concerned about," he said, "is that Americans will get impatient and say, because they don't like events in Southeast Asia or they don't like the government in Saigon, that we should withdraw. That only makes it easy for the Communists. I think we should stay".

Kennedy Remembered Our Blunder in China

He said he had no intention of repeating the blunder committed in China, when the Truman-Marshall-Acheson effort to establish a coalition government weakened the Chiang Kai-shek regime until it had to flee the mainland.

Kennedy used the analogy in a clear attempt to show that while the Diem government left much to be desired, it at least was a government which should be supported until a stronger regime was assured.

While Kennedy spoke out firmly in that interview, the undermining of the Diem regime had already begun. But Kennedy certainly was not aware until later of how he was being boxed in.

On that same September day there were Senators who should have known better blowing off about how the Diem regime must go and "democracy" come to South Viet Nam.

In view of the latest power seizure in Saigon, they should now be required to eat their demagogic complaints of Sept. 9. Particularly Sen. Frank Carlson (R-Kans.), who demanded that aid to Diem stop, for "the time has come for us to be realistic and practical."

What Carlson then urged finally occurred. The result has been neither realistic nor practical.

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